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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

MAY 2005

MAY HAPPENINGS

The monthly luncheon will be held at noon, Thursday, May 19, at the Kate Lobrano House. This month's speaker is Tim Moseley. He will speak to us about future goals for the Alice Moseley Folk Art and Antique Museum, and how it will effect the people of our community. Please call 467-4090 for reservations as the seating will be limited. Cost of the lunch is \$7.00 payable at the door.

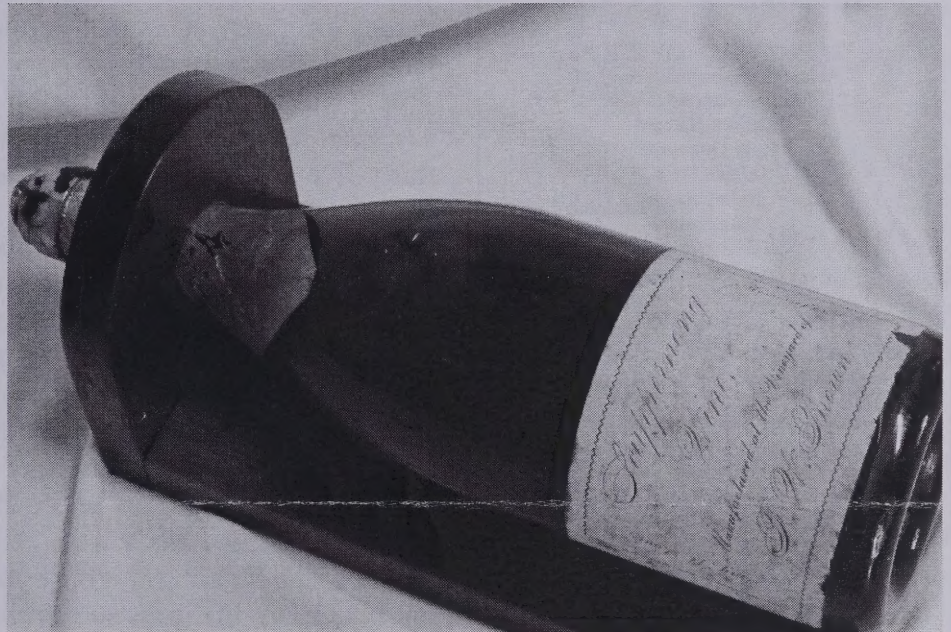
The Extreme Weather Fair was held Saturday, April 30th, at the Stennis Airport. Hancock County Historical Society Executive Director Charles Gray set up a display including the famous "hurricane ball" from Hurricane Betsy, albums of pictures from Hurricane Camille, and bulletin boards. Thank you, Charles.

Mr. Hank Langer, an RSVP volunteer, has begun working on creating a data base for all of the old maps we have stored away in closets and under counters; it's a monumental task and we thank him.

The board is looking into the feasibility of sponsoring a tour of homes sometime in the spring of 2006. We'll keep you posted.

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. Leland Brown
Ms. Lucy Weston Munroe
Ms. Ann Weston Porter
Eric & Alice Nelson



Bottle of Scuppernong Champagne from Brown's Vineyard. On Display at the Hancock County Historical Society.

Waveland Receives Magnolia Marker

Hancock County Historical Society member and historian Russell Guerin has successfully obtained another Magnolia Marker for the city of Waveland in Hancock County. "This marker along with the marker for the Pirate House will be installed very soon," said Russell.

Following is the marker text for Brown's Vineyard which was approved by the Department of Archives and History.

Brown's Vineyard

Located at this site, Brown's Vineyard, established 1874, was a popular resort during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The wine, produced on site from scuppernong grapes, was marketed and sold across the United States. The vineyard, which also provided entertainment, was forced to close in 1920 due to Prohibition

THE

HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Editor - Dale St. Amant
 Publisher - Mike Cuevas
 Published monthly by the

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 HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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**LOBRANO HOUSE
 HOURS**

MONDAY — FRIDAY
 10:00AM — 3:00PM

MISSION STATEMENT

To preserve the general and architectural history of Hancock County and to preserve the Kate Lobrano House and collections therein: to research and interpret life in Hancock County; and to encourage an appreciation of and interest in historical preservation.

**Valerie Russell Lane
 1918 -2005**

**Fred McDonald
 2005**

In 1895, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad published a book entitled *Along the Gulf* in order to promote travel along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Among other areas, one attraction was called Brown's Vineyard. It was called a "veritable garden of beauty" crediting Mr. Brown with having "planted almost exclusively the famous scuppernong grapes on ninety acres of the finest land in this section of the country."

The article then went on to say that the vineyard was started thirty-five years before by Mr. and Mrs. F.W. Brown, who made it "a great resort for the society people, who are summering along the Gulf Coast, and many are the pleasant parties and dances which take place in the large hall and dancing pavilion of the house." Mr. Brown is said to have "...everything in the way of machinery pertaining to successful wine making, and has a wine cellar in one of the buildings on the estate, on which at the present writing, there is stored several thousand dollars of this wine...Scuppernong champagne is celebrated all over Mississippi and Louisiana and all the surrounding country for its medical qualities and orders come to him every day for his celebrated goods, some people sending from Chicago, New York, and other Northern and Eastern cities."

From: *Sea Coast Echo*, (5 Sep 1903)

Frederick W. Brown (Braun) and his wife Anna came from New Orleans to Bay St. Louis-Waveland in the early 1860's. Frederick and Anna were natives of Germany. In March of 1867 the Browns purchased a plot of land from Lorenzo Corte in Section 34, Township 8

Range 14 West in Hancock County. Included in this were, mules, cows, hogs, farming utensils and a house of furniture. It had been a business of Mr. Brown's to make wine and on this location he also added the machines and equipment to make wine which was to become famous all over the United States.

In the year 1912 Frederick and Anna added to their property holding 43 more acres which they bought from A.A. McCue. This property ran to Nicholson Avenue, and back to the highway to where the Old Spanish Trail and the highway intersect. It was at this location they planted the Scuppernong Grape vines on approximately fifteen acres of their land. As the vines grew, arbors approximately ten feet square and eight feet high and about ten feet apart were erected; these arbors allowed the visitors to walk under and pick grapes off the vines.

Brown's Vineyard soon became a One Family garden spot of beauty located near the pine woods some five miles from Bay St. Louis. Mr. Brown's wine soon became popular and the Scuppernong champagne Wine was served with the bread that was made by his wife Anna. Popularity grew and about 1905, tally-ho wagons with a double team of horses would carry hotel guests of the Pickwick, Tulane, and Clifton Hotels to Brown's Vineyard to drink the wine and eat the bread and dance.

Upon arrival at the Vineyard, there would be at the front of the house a pen which had three alligators for the guests to view. It is told that a resident who was a butcher would bring the alligators scraps of meat and when his truck

would drive into the gate the alligators would know he was there and would be waiting for him to feed them.

As the guests entered into the house there was a large center hall off which were small individual rooms with round tables and chairs. The guests would sit at these tables and drink the wine and eat the bread with homemade butter. There was a piano in the room and any guest who wished to play could play his favorite song, but if there was no one who could play, they would ask for Charlie Banderet to come to play for the people, and everyone would dance. (Transcript of an interview follows.)

The popularity of Brown's Vineyard soon became famous in this resort area and people of society would come from New Orleans to drink this delicious wine. The Vineyard soon became famous for its mail order business as well as for serving the residents of the area. It is said that the wine had medical qualities, not a cure, but a prevention against illness.

In addition to the house as a place to visit there was also a summer house, which could be reached by walking through the center hall to the rear and along a hundred feet or more of arbors. The summer house was built up on piers, had a covered roof, was open to the breezes and could be used for picnics. The building was capable of seating about 25 or 30 people and was about fifty feet by twenty feet.

Frederick and Anna prospered in their wine and bread making. In a wine cellar on the property he had at one time an inventory of a thousand dollars.

The Scuppernong Champagne Wine and Brown's Vineyard prospered until the time of prohibition when they were forced to close. There were no longer the visiting vacationers who came to this beautiful grape vineyard to drink of the wine, eat the bread and to dance or picnic.

It is said that Frederick buried his wine on the grounds of the Vineyard but years later the Federal authorities found out about it and dug up the wine and broke all the bottles that remained.

Their children were Emma Brown Saunders, William Frederick Brown, Esmeralda Brown Von Droskowski, and Albert Felix Brown. It was Albert the youngest child, who chose to remain at home and continue the traditions of the vineyard. Choosing to follow in the footsteps of his frugal and industrious parents, he died March 1936, aged 64 years, survived by his widow, the former Miss Bessie McGuire, of New Orleans. They had one son who died at the age of ten.

For over twenty-five years, he was secretary-treasurer of the Federal Land Bank, located at New Orleans. His position proved beneficial to farmers of Hancock County.

In May of 1977, Margaret M. Gibbens of the Hancock County Historical Society interviewed Mr. Charlie Banderet regarding Brown's Vineyard. :

Mr. Banderet: *Albert was the son, the mother and father were small. In my young days I played the piano. And we had the undertaking and livery stable business here and*

*Tally-Ho (Tally-Ho, a double team of horses drawn for the taxi service to hotels) when the hotel close you take the crowd to Brown's Vineyard. If they had no piano player I had to go. That's how my life was in those days. .. Mrs. Brown's favorite piece was **My Pretty Red Wing**, and my mother too. I played all by note. My first music lesson was fifty cents and the one before that was twenty-five*

Where was the Brown's Vineyard House?

Right on the Old Spanish Trail... where the U.S. 90 and the old Spanish Trail come together. Right there was Brown's Vineyard on the left.

And it went all the way to Nicholson Avenue?

No ma'm not that far...they owned both sides..it was there before they built the Old Spanish Trail.

How far up the highway did it go? Where the shopping center is?

Yes, well some of it. They had all of the scuppernong vines in the yard.

How big was the area where the vines were?

Oh, they had quite a number of vines, just how many I don't know.

What happened to it after prohibition?...after they couldn't sell the wine anymore?

Well, they buried it, and a fellow gave away on them and revenue man came and dug it up and broke it....that was over with. ...It just

went down to nothin.

What happened to the house?

Now I don't know if some part of it there yet or not. I don't know if a neighbor bought it or what. Just don't exactly remember about it.

They used to serve you wine with homemade bread and all. No food?

No ma'm, butter with bread.

...they had a big summer house?

Yes, summer house way up on pilings,...more than ten feet high. covered with a roof...about 30' x 80'..not by 80' I don't believe.

**Where did you play the piano?
On the pavilion?**

No, in the house. They had the piano in the room there, and they had the dining room I guess you call it where they ate their bread and butter and the wine.

Where were the alligators?

The house was here and the alligators were right there and they'd go under the ground. They had one they claimed was over a hundred years old, he got out and they shot him....and I'll tell you what I seen. Frank Quintenni the butcher had a Model T Ford truck, I happened to be there and, Model T Ford, come there, and those alligators but those alligators never moved or anything, under the ground, when Frank Quintennie truck come up there I wish

you'd see those three alligators, the noise they make, come up and meet him. Frank Quintenni was a butcher had a butcher shop and he'd throw them the likes and all where they'd kill and those alligators knew that truck without seeing him or anything, just hearing them.

They just had them there for people to look at?

Yes, ma'm.

And they were by the house ,by the driveway?

Yes, ma'm.

How many people would that place hold?

We had a pretty large Tally-ho, a crowd of people.

Mr. Banderet you were born in Bay St. Louis?

Yes, ma'm, if my mother had been living on the 20th of last month (April 1977) sh'd been born in Bay St. Louis 103 years ago.

What was her maiden name?

She was a Capedepon, her father and mother was from Bordeaux, France. My father was from the French part of Switzerland. In the early days, living in New Orleans.

And your daddy had a brick works here in Bay St. Louis?

Yes, ma'm he had a brick yard here on Main Street across from where that Winn Dixie store is

(North west corner of hwy 90 and Main St.) Him and old man Guilliot (Tilliot). I remember that I was a little bittie boy. He had another brick yard on Felicity Street. You know where Ed Larroux lives, his house is right where he dug the pit.

In his letter to the Department of Archives and History, Russell Guerin also states, " At least one full bottle (of the scuppernong wine) remains (intact), and a gift of it was made some time ago to the Hancock County Historical Society. It has never been opened, and may be the only intact bottle in existence. (This bottle may be seen at the Historical Society)

Mr. Ray Kidd, who owns a restaurant on the land that once was the vineyard, reports that occasionally an old bottle surfaces when any digging is necessary on the premises."

Interviews : Pirate House

Last issue the Pirate House was the main topic. Following are two interviews which were not included for lack of space.

Interviewer: Russell Guerin, HCHS. Mr. Guerin interviewed Mr. Pete Necaise on 11-2-03.

Mr. Necaise worked for the Lister family, owners

of the Pirate House before Camille. He did refrigeration, A/C and electrical work from the 1950's to the time of Camille.

(He) says he believes there was a secret room in the house, as a safe (about which he had know nothing previously) was found after the hurricane on the grounds where the house had been. Most of the debris had gone into the pond. He believes because the safe was so heavy it set down before making it to the pond. It took four men to move it. It was old and made of cast iron. (It) was important in that Lister had no knowledge of the safe before the storm, and therefore it was reasoned that it had been in a secret room. There was no combination, so Necaise kept it for Lister for a few weeks at his home until Lister could get it moved to New Orleans to a locksmith and have it opened. When asked what was in it, Lister was reported to have said, "Oh, nothing."

Necaise reports that he has been in the fabled tunnel, and at one point, ran electrical wires and lights into it.

It was entered as by going through a closet just behind the front brick wall

and behind the steps. There was a doorway, and then the descent was gradual. He said one could "hardly tell" he was going down.

The ceiling, walls, and floor were all made of 12x12's butted together. The timbers were rough cut, and, he believed, of cypress. He guessed that they had been caulked, "like a boat," as the floor was dry. The long beams were the sides, and there were crossbeams overhead, but in addition, there were upright supports spaced apart. Head room was 6 feet or more, as Necaise is 6 feet and had no problem walking underneath. Width was 4 feet or more.

There was a very interesting observation was made by Necaise) about spikes, similar to railroad spikes but without a right angle end, instead each had a hole at the end with a ring. They were driven into beams near (the) top, and were spaced about every 2 feet. The possibility is that they were to secure slaves, in a hideaway like a big dungeon.

The entrance was not visible from the outside of the house.

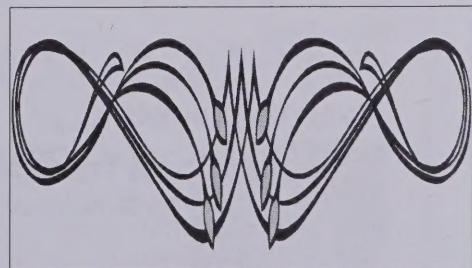
Necaise says that he went in about 100 feet,

maybe 200, and never saw the end. It was dark, and besides, he believes legend that it extended to an island, maybe even to the Chandeliers. He says he went in as "far as the water," running electric cable and installing lights.

Necaise reports that Lister felt that some timbers were rotten, and so Lister filled in and cemented the mouth, leaving the rest to remain as a tunnel.

Lister raised Shetland ponies in a fenced area and had a big barn, but kept some things in the tunnel, including saddles and other equipment. It was for that purpose that Necaise was employed to run electric lights in the tunnel.

There was a wishing well with a 4-foot diameter on the west side of the house. One could look down 15 or 20 feet and see many coins. The well was covered or filled with the coins remaining.



Interview with Dr. Mildred Usher, PhD.**Clermont Harbor, May, 14, 2004.****Interviewer: Russell Guerin, HCHS**

In the 1950's, she and a friend bicycled to the Pirate House. She thinks that there was an open house. A lady gave them a tour of the house. What she remembers well was the "dungeon," located in the basement of the house. Entered from the West side, it was below ground level, perhaps three or four feet. She recalls that she had to step down to enter. Inside, she saw metal rings in the wall and in the floor, and maybe in a wooden beam overhead.

In addition to the dungeon, Dr. Usher remembers that it ran to the little bayou that fed the pond on the West side of the house. The friend who made the visit with Dr. Usher was Joy Carr. Unfortunately, she is deceased.

Clay Creations Jenise McCardell

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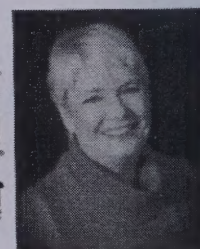
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"As a Senior, I'm more concerned about the return OF my principal rather than return ON my principal.." Will Rogers



Micah Keel Robert Padilla

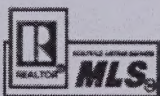
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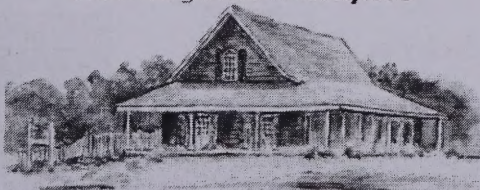
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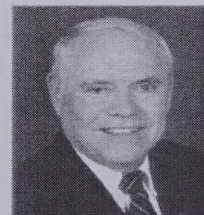


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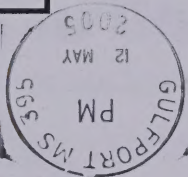
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